GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2759
ANSWERED ON:10.05.2016
Cultivation of Water Inte nsive Crops
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of water intensive and water guzzling crops which are being produced in the country, State/UT-wise;

(b) whether water level is depleting in various parts of the country due to cultivation of such crops and if so, the details thereof along with the percentage of water consumption in the agriculture sector in the country and ground water level during the last three years, State/UT-wise;

(c) whether the Union Government has urged the several State Governments including Maharashtra to impose restriction on the cultivation of water intensive and water guzzling crops in vulnerable areas in order to overcome the drought situation in their respective States and if so, the details thereof and the response of the State Governments thereto;

(d) the water-intensity of wheat, rice, jowar and bajra cultivation in India respectively; and

(e) whether the Government proposes to provide incentives to farmers for shifting from cultivation of water intensive crops to less water-intensive crops and if so, the details thereof along with the possible changes in the production of various crops thereafter?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a): Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has identified rice and sugarcane as major water guzzling/water intensive field crops as they require high amount of water for producing unit quantity of output/economic yield. State-wise area of water guzzling/water intensive crops (rice and sugarcane) for 2014-15 and 2015-16 (2nd Advance Estimate) is given in Annexure-I.
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-2-

(b): Ground water in the country is being used for various purposes including irrigation for cultivation of crops. The ground water is depleting in the country and agriculture is one of the major factor contributing to its depletion. Around 60% of irrigated agriculture and 85% of drinking water supply are dependent on ground water. Ground water resources in many parts of the country are being depleted because of unsustainable extraction levels that exceed natural recharge rates. Whether groundwater is depleting due to the water intensive crops is not an established fact due to the common pool nature of groundwater and the difficulty in observing it directly.

As per the latest assessment of the ground water resource (as in 2011) of the country, the Annual Replenishable Ground Water Resource of the country is 433 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM), the Net Annual Ground Water availability is 398 BCM. The annual ground water utilization for irrigation use for the entire country is 222 BCM constituting 55% of net annual ground water availability and about 91% of the total annual ground water draft of the country. The details of state-wise ground water resources availability and utilization is given at Annexure-II.

The details of ground water level during pre-moonsoon (April/May) for the years 2013, 2014 & 2015 is given at Annexure-III, IV & V.

(c): No, Madam. There is no central or state law under which cultivation of water intensive and water guzzling crops can be restricted. However, steps are being taken to promote less water requiring crops like oilseeds, pulses, coarse cereals etc in drought prone areas. Besides, cultivation of drought tolerant cultivars, use of efficient irrigation devices and water conservation practices are also being promoted.

Central Water Commission, Government of India time to time advised states for judicious use of available water, proper planning for cropping pattern and chalk out strategy for avoiding water intensive crops to the extent required.

(d): The water requirement of wheat, rice, jowar and bajra is given as under:
Crop Water requirement (mm)
Wheat 400-600
Rice 1200
Jowar 300-500

Bajra 300-500

(e): Less water requiring crops like pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals are being promoted under various crop development programmes like National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP), Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI), Crop Diversification in Original Green Revolution States, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), state plan etc. The average area and production of crops for 2010-11 to 2014-15 and for the year 2015-16 (2nd Advance Estimate) is given at Annexure-VI.